

CLAIMS:

Sub B1

1. A process for introducing solutes into dried fruit which comprises:
- (a) providing dried fruit of a moisture content between 5 to 40% or more;
 - (b) disrupting the structure of the fruit whilst maintaining integrity thereof;
 - 5 (c) reacting the fruit with a solute solution containing one or more water activity controlling solutes for a time sufficient to allow solute infusion into the fruit, optionally removing, if necessary, any remnant infusion liquid and thereafter drying the fruit to a desired moisture content and water activity, and optionally,
 - (d) treating the surface of the fruit with one or more sugars.
- 10 2. A process for introducing solutes into dried fruit which comprises:
- (a) providing dried fruit of a moisture content between 5% to 40% or more;
 - (b) subjecting the dried fruit to a process which causes cracks in the fruit whilst maintaining the essential structure and appearance of the fruit;
 - 15 (c) mixing the fruit with a solute solution containing one or more water activity controlling solutes for a time sufficient to allow complete infusion of solute into the fruit;
 - (d) removing, if necessary, any remnant infusion liquid and thereafter drying the fruit product to a desired moisture content and water activity; and optionally,
 - 20 (e) treating the surface of the fruit with one or more sugars.

Sub AA1 3. ~~A process according to claim 1 or 2 wherein step (b) is provided by passing the fruit through a roller mill, by explosion puffing or toasting.~~

25 4. A process according to claim 3 wherein the fruit is rolled such that the uptake of solute is between about 1.3 to about 1.9 fold greater than that of unrolled fruit.

Sub AA2

~~5. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the fruit is a fruit piece having dimensions from about 2 x 2 x 2 mm to about 60 x 30 x 10 mm.~~

Sub AA2

6. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the fruit is an apple piece which is rolled through a roller mill having a roller gap width from 5% to 20% of the average apple piece width. *when*
- 5 7. A process according to any previous claim wherein the fruit is a pear piece which is rolled through a roller mill of roller gap width equal to 35% to 45% of the piece width. *when*
8. A process according to any previous claim wherein the fruit is a raisin which is rolled through a roller mill having a roll gap width between 30% to 50% of the raisin width. *when*
- 10 9. A process according to claim 1 or 2 wherein a water activity-controlled fruit product is produced within about thirty minutes to about four hours.

add AA3

B2
add